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MOON OVER YOUR LEFT SHOULDER

By E. MERRILL ROOT

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING that it is bad luck to see the moon over your left shoulder. Whatever the sense or nonsense of the superstition, we should all agree that it is *monotonous* to see the moon — or things more important than the moon — over the left shoulder only. Or why do we have a right shoulder also?

Thus, moon-struck over the left shoulder, we sink into a subconscious cage of compulsions where logic is "liquidated" and "rationality" is made an excuse for unreason. Caught in that psychological cage, we see Marshall Tito as a sun and Senator McCarthy as its eclipse; or we shout for "academic freedom" when all we mean is a microphone for the Left and a gag for the Right. When we have reached such centers of lunacy, is it not perhaps because we have gazed too long at the moon over our left shoulder? The moon is too beautiful a vision and the world is too various an adventure for us to crook our necks into so rigid an orthodoxy and to become fixed in so ludicrous a compulsion.

Yet the typical intellectuals today — who are, of course, the "liberals" — tend to gaze at the moon or the world over the left shoulder only, until they become fixed in that dogma of position, like solemn one-sided storks whose necks are frozen in some perpetual and sinister deep-freeze. And that is a painful position for storks — and an undignified position for "intellectuals."

Yet how else can you explain the obsession of the "liberal" intellectuals? Are they not tranced, bewitched and frozen into the dark delusion of a dream? Surely free minds (if they were awake and aware) would see the fixations into which they have fallen; would laugh at their own solemn obsessions; would wrench their stiff necks out of dogmatism into variety; would glance at the moon over both shoulders now and then — even if they preferred the Left for a steady look.

I believe that the result or the cause of this — I am not sure which — is that the "liberals" never see things concretely, but only abstractly. Our intellectual tendency today is to dilute reality (which is always concrete) into ideality (which is always abstract). Thus the intellectuals tumble into such gobblydegook as "liquidate": They

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glibly say that collectivists "liquidate" the Kulaks or the bourgeoisie, and it sounds as harmless as pouring cyanide over the pages of a telephone directory.

But the plain man is wiser; he feels the pistol placed behind the right ear, he hears the muffled bang, he sees the gray cerebral matter spurt hideously out of the shattered skull. And the poet is wiser: thus Shakespeare, when the evil Cornwall stamps out the bruised and broken plasm of poor bound Gloucester's eyes, does not soften it with the lie of "liquidation" — Cornwall's blunt honest words are, "Out, vile jelly!"

Much of our brainy sentimentality today comes because, looking at the moon over the left shoulder only, we never see in terms of concrete reality, but only in terms of abstract ideality. Therefore, we know not what we do, and blindly from the best motives we do the worst things.

Think, for example, of the resolutely "democratic" Mrs. Roosevelt. As a sincere humanitarian, she sees herself a perpetual Florence Nightingale for a humanity sick in a continual Crimea. But, as a "liberal" of the intellectual fringe, she cannot see things concretely, only abstractly. Recently she made a tour of the world, spending a great deal of her extraordinary energy telling Europe and Asia what a bad, bad boy America's Senator McCarthy is. In the course of her wanderlust, she came to Comrade Tito's barbed wire Paradise, where she took happy time out to praise that "leader's" charming smile and firm efficiency. Here, too, she deplored to Tito the sad fact of the Senator from Wisconsin, telling the man of the charming smile and firm efficiency just how rough and tough the good Senator is. This must have made the realistic Tito grin all over his subconscious.

For though it is true that Senator McCarthy can be rough and tough, did Mrs. Roosevelt see the concrete reality and irony of her action? Just what sense does it make, to seek out Comrade Tito to complain of such a thing? The Senator has called certain men, rightly or wrongly, Communists or dupes of Communists, and has done his best (legally, constitutionally) to see that, if they are, they shall not harm America.

But Comrade Tito has acted on the knowledge that certain men are *not* Communists (that General, for one, who was the Ally that America betrayed), and had them arrested by his private police, and tried them before courts packed with his own yes-men under laws of his own concocting, and blew their lives out before his private firing-squads. Just what sense does it make to complain to such a vastly rougher and tougher Comrade Tito that Senator McCarthy is rough and tough? It is like deploring the roped-ring manners of Rocky Marciano to some goon who slugs men in dark alleys with brass-knuckles or a blackjack!

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If only Mrs. Roosevelt could see things not in terms of abstract ideality but of concrete reality! The Boston *Post* reported a speech she made to the teachers at Lewiston, Maine, October 29, 1953; and in this, too, she seems to say "liquidate" rather than "Out, vile jelly." I quote from the *Post*: "Even the subject of torture is viewed abroad from a different concept," she said. "In many lands where torture is applied by one group against the other, what they do is not regarded as the horrible crime we consider it," Mrs. Roosevelt said. The fallacy of the abstract with a vengeance!

Mrs. Roosevelt is cushioning reality with the shock-absorbers of the abstract. She does not see torture concretely — the kleig lights blatant in the face that cannot sleep, the harsh iteration of voices perpetually hurled in the ears that cannot sleep . . . or the rubber hoses and the slivers under the nails. American G.I.'s brainwashed by Chinese Reds, the Rubishovs of the world under darkness at noon in Moscow, Cardinal Mindzenty broken by torture and drugs, Foreign Minister Masaryk forced to leap in terror from the high window in Prague.

THE MILLIONS OF COMMON MEN subjected to "corrective labor camps" (that modern Bed of Procrustes) may now take comfort. What happens to them "is not the horrible crime we consider it" — in the concepts of people "abroad." It is torture only from our American point of view. So strike up a Lucifer to light your fag, and smile, boys, smile! Now if Mrs. Roosevelt could *see* torture as it really *is,* concretely, her spirit would be so outraged that she would never rest until she abolished it from the earth. The trouble is that she does not see things in terms of "Out, vile jelly," but of "liquidation." And the root of this fixation, which blinds all "liberals" is the hypnosis that leads them to look at the moon over the left shoulder only.

In area after area today, the same "rational" fixation causes unreason. The same double standard of morality, the same schizophrenia is everywhere. "Liberals" object to the "methods" of McCarthy, and then a western editor publishes a demand that the Senator be stopped — by assassination if necessary! The "liberals" of the Women's Republican Club of New York, having scheduled William F. Buckley, Jr., for a speech, suddenly cancel it when Buckley's book on McCarthy appears — in the name of "liberalism." Or the same "liberals" who grow hoarse with shouts of "book burning," through the hot-foot applied in reviews or the worse suppression of silence (Frost calls it "the slow smokeless burning of decay"), incinerate the books of the individualist Right in psychological fires.

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Take an ironic contrast from the University of Chicago. I have studied scores of posters and placards from that university, through the late 40's and early 50's (all stamped with official university approval). I have found none advocating radical individualism. I have found scores advertising speeches and meetings to advocate collectivism, often of the extreme Left. One of these (officially approved) called for a meeting of "protest." It read in huge black letters: "THE CRIME OF THINKING 11 Communists Jailed for Ideas!" The speakers were "Geraldine Lightfoot, Negro Woman Leader of the Communist Party, Tess Erlich, Attorney for the Civil Rights Conference, Campus Leaders." They were to protest "Jailing of Lawyers, Denying of Bail, *Convicting for Ideas.*" (Italics added.) Thus, even at this hour so much later than we think, intellectuals at the University of Chicago seem not to know (or to wish to know) that Communism is not a classroom for ideas but a conspiracy of militant will. Moon-dazzled over the left shoulder, they equate Quisling with Socrates.

Yet notice how the same intellectuals treat a spokesman of individualism who dares criticize the cartel of the collectivist Left at the same university. Robert V. Andelson, a student in the Theological School, published in *The American Student* a documented criticism of what he found at the University. He cited some 17 examples — speeches, meetings, activities, pronouncements — with dates and names taken from the *Maroon* or university bulletins. Thereupon, the *Maroon* — that mighty champion of "academic freedom" — attacked him in a front page editorial *plus a feature article* (February 13, '53). The style of attack may be illustrated by this quotation: "Mr. Andelson . . . is a menace and a pain in the neck, nothing more and nothing less. There is nothing that can be done *with* his type, but it is possible to do something *about* it." To get a reply published, Mr. Andelson had to pay the *Maroon* $36.40 (I have a photostat of the receipted bill) for the privilege of freedom of speech! Thus again, there is the double standard and the intellectual schizophrenia — if individualists criticize collectivism, they are "a menace and a pain in the neck"; if collectivists of the extreme Left are criticized, it is always "for the crime of thinking."

Does all this not stem from the primary fixation of the "liberal" fashion, that all, like storks in a perpetual deep-freeze, have the bad luck or the resolute idiocy of looking at the moon *over the left shoulder only?*

E. Merrill Root is Professor of English at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, and author of six books of poetry. His latest work is a book on education to be published in 1955 by Devin-Adair Company. He has contributed numerous articles to HUMAN EVENTS among which are "Darkness at Noon in American Colleges" July 30, 1952 and "Mass Hypnosis on the Campus" and "Let's Review a Textbook" in February and April, 1954.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* — *Contributing Editors:* FRANK CHODOROV, WILLIS J. BALLINGER

Vol. XI, No. 41 — Wednesday, October 13, 1954 — Washington, D. C.

Denver Decision: Ike has wobbled into a compromise political strategy which places him in as weak a position as he occupied in his over-extended move in the Ardennes, in 1944 (when the Germans counter-attacked so dangerously). At least, that's the view among impartial observers in the Capital.

He has demanded that the voters give him a Republican congress. Yet, he still declines to support individual GOP candidates in various states and constituencies. Of course, if the GOP wins both houses of congress, this "half-way strategy" will have paid off and he will emerge the happiest and most popular of warriors.

But there is unusual unanimity among observers that he can't possibly save the House of Representatives for the Republican party. And many press veterans here believe that the Senate will go Democratic too. If the GOP loses either or both of the houses of congress, Eisenhower's prestige with his party will unquestionably diminish. The GOP politicians — it is reported — will complain that his failure to back individual GOP candidates prevented them from winning.

Also — it is pointed out — Ike's strategy has offended the Democrats, naturally, by calling for their defeat as a party. (Their leaders reacted promptly and vigorously). That will make difficult what is known in some White House circles as "Operation Bi-partisan." The left-wingers in the Chief Executive's staff have reportedly welcomed the prospect of a Democratic-controlled congress. In such an event, they would play ball with the "liberal" Democrats on Capitol Hill and create a bi-partisan Administration. However practicable such a course would actually prove, it accords with the old Ike dream of being elected President by both parties.

But now the President, by calling for a GOP congress, has impaired, if not destroyed, chances of "Operation Bi-partisan." Even if they only win the House, the Democrats, including their own left-wingers, will be in an excellent position to give Ike some of the treatment accorded Herbert Hoover in 1931 and 1932 when a Democratic House played the game on a cruelly partisan basis. And, in view of the present split between "liberals" and conservatives in the GOP, the prospects of an incredibly chaotic congress have sharply increased.

Voter "Apathy": Voter frustration, not voter apathy (as GOP big-wigs claim) is the real trouble with the Republican campaign to win the elections — according to the best opinion in the Capital. Experts here think that the policies of the Administration since early 1953 have been largely shaped by the fallacious myth of the "independent and shifting Democratic vote." The White House Palace Guard followed a course designed to attract what they thought were persuadable New Deal voters; this policy thereby alienated what Taft called the "uninterested vote," which had remained "at home" during presidential elections from 1940 on. Therefore it is feared that this "uninterested vote" will remain away from the polls this year, thus ensuring a Democratic victory.

The widely-publicized notion that Ike won in 1952 by capturing the "independents who have voted Democratic" is severely criticized by students of election statistics. They point out that Adlai Stevenson, Democratic candidate in 1952, won 27,315,000 votes. Yet in 1948, Democratic votes for Truman, Thurmond (Democratic States Rights party) and Wallace (Democratic Progressive) totaled only 26,430,000. Indeed, Stevenson won more votes than did Roosevelt in either 1940 or 1944. Obviously, no important number of "independents," who had in recent years voted Democratic, turned to Ike in 1952.

A revealing view on what really happened in the polling booths in November 1952 was expressed, on the eve of Ike's victorious inauguration, by Mr. Wayne Hood, then Executive Director of the GOP National Committee. He claimed that a secret plan guided the management of the Ike fight against

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Stevenson. "The major point of campaign strategy," said Hood, as reported in the New York Times, on January 18, 1953, "was the decision to drop the 'me-too' approach that had cost the party dearly in previous campaigns; to pay less attention to the so-called 'independent vote' and to concentrate on the 'stay-at-homes' who had not been at the polls in previous elections. . . . The stay-at-homes outnumber the independents by approximately 45,000,000 to an estimated 3,000,000 to 4,000,000." Hood emphasized that an overwhelming majority of the Ike supporters came from the "stay-at-homes," and the balance was composed of new voters.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hood's idea had no influence on the White House Palace Guard. For instance, it was a commonplace — following the November 1952 victory — that a transference of a large part of the "Catholic vote" played a big role in swinging the big-city states to the GOP column. In New York, the Negro and Jewish blocs remained quite faithful to the Democrats and politicians noted that the Catholic vote, much of it influenced by Senator McCarthy, quite evidently helped produce a majority in the Empire state for Eisenhower. Yet, this obvious picture seemed lost on the White House advisers. After the election, they courted the Jewish and Negro votes and actually seemed to seek to alienate the Catholic vote (*vide* the treatment of McCarthy and Manion). Mr. David Lawrence, in his newspaper column, reported that in the Maine election last month a shift of the Catholic vote helped reduce the 1952 majorities of the Republican candidates for Senator and Representative by an average 12 per cent.

If these be the hidden currents shaping voter attitudes in November, only an abrupt and radical change in GOP campaign strategy can save the day.

Wilson Incident: CIO uproar over Defense Secretary Wilson's clumsily-phrased remark about workers will not really hurt the GOP candidates — say shrewd political watchers here. The already firmly convinced Democratic voters of the left wing will like Reuther's attacks on Wilson, but potentially "stay-at-home" GOP people may react angrily against unfair treatment of Wilson and — go to the polls. That's more important — it is said — than efforts to win the so-called labor vote. Ike's prompt backing of his Secretary of Defense is praised by some conservatives.

Not Merely Gossip: Strange doings in Houston, Texas, illustrate the anomalous situation within the GOP today. Republicans have put up William Butler, as their candidate for the congressional race in that district, in opposition to the incumbent Democratic Representative Albert Thomas, a New Dealer. The latter is being supported by the *Houston Post*, owned by former Governor and Mrs. W. P. Hobby. Mr. Butler is running on a "support Ike" platform. Mr. Thomas has been severely criticizing the Eisenhower regime and his voting record in the past session has certainly not been that of a supporter of the Eisenhower program. The cream of the bitter jest for Houston Republicans is that Mrs. Hobby is none other than Oveta Culp Hobby, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in Eisenhower's Cabinet. Local Republicans are calling on the owners of the *Houston Post* to go down the line for Butler.

● Premier Mendes-France's apparent turn against Soviet Russia and support of measures for German rearmament might — in the opinion of diplomatic row — have been brought about by the American CIA. That body, it is said, knows how to deal with French politicians.

● Irish Catholic jealousy of the rising power of Italo-American Catholics in the Massachusetts Democratic party may ensure the re-election of GOP Senator Saltonstall. Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy has failed to back Democratic senatorial candidate Foster Furcolo in a keen race. Such interesting cross-currents among "minorities" are described by Samuel Lubell in his scholarly volume *The Future of American Politics* (*Harpers*, 1952) which remains the best modern guide to trends in the American political system.

McCarthy: According to our Maine correspondent, the resentment of voters against the GOP for persecution of McCarthy was reflected in the election statistics. GOP Representative C. G. McIntire, of the 3rd Congressional District of Maine, according to the *New York Times*, September 15, was "the biggest vote-getter" of all the GOP candidates for the national legislature. Why? Our correspondent says that it was because McIntire made the campaign statement that "I think a good deal more of Joe McCarthy than some of his critics." The other candidates avoided the issue.

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The Disease of Socialism: In the French Nationalized railways the government is paying out as much in retirement pensions as it is in wages. This tragic economic condition illustrates once more how dangerous the socialistic "welfare" disease can become and how difficult it is to eliminate it. The predecessor of Mendes-France tried to correct the situation by raising the retirement age on the railways. His laudable effort, however, touched off one of the most crippling series of strikes in post-war France.

Across the English Channel the British too, are discovering the difficulty of resisting the "gimme" racket. Last year it was reported that England was spending more on socialized medicine and social security pensions than on national armament. The British government actuary said that before long expenditure would greatly exceed income under the British social security system, and that he frankly didn't know where the money could come from, since a further increase of taxes seemed impossible. There were over five million people receiving pensions and the figure was rising rapidly. The government tried to induce workers to forego pensions and work a little longer, offering an extra return on their pensions when they finally quit. But the government's offer did not prove popular.

Another signal example of socialistic "welfare" is reported from Montevideo, Uruguay, by the noted correspondent Edward Tomlinson. He says that government ownership of business deprives Uruguayan workers of an incentive; many "soldier" on the job, but are protected by labor laws which make it practically impossible to separate a drone from the public payroll. The government-owned electrical power trust can't keep the lights on. Whole neighborhoods are often "in blackouts for hours at a time."

The roadbeds of the government-owned railroads are "depleted," schedules "are no longer regular" and the annual deficit of the railroad trust is "almost as large as the income." Practically all the government corporations engaged in business enjoy heavy subsidies. The inefficiency of these corporations, says Tomlinson, springs from the fact that their managers are political appointees, a result inevitable under socialism.

Patriotic Education: There is an outfit in Detroit offering more than a quack remedy to the current rush of crime, sex and sadism permeating books for youngsters. It is called Patriotic Education, Penebscot Building, Detroit 26, Michigan. Its aim is to titillate the imagination of youngsters to the point where America's historic past and potential future is more exciting and stimulating than the harrowing adventures of Willie, the Green Buzzard.

Here is the way it works. Patriotic Education has secured 240 colored pictures depicting important events in the building of America, from the landing of Columbus down to the events in 1950. These pictures are reproduced in four colors, each one about two by three inches in size. In addition to this a large, well bound book containing the text of the history of America is provided.

The young girls and boys are given the task of taking the little pictures and mounting them into the appropriate places in the text, where the space is provided. The approach is highly educational and exciting to the young mind.

The national advisory committee of the new outfit includes such stalwarts as Columnist George Sokolsky, Senator Harry Byrd, Publisher J. H. Gipson, and Milton H. Lory, national head of the Sons of the American Revolution.

If Patriotic Education can turn the attention of America's juveniles from sadistic punks to inspired patriots, they will do a great job.

UN: On September 13, the State Department held a briefing session on the United Nations for Washington representatives of national organizations. The habit of briefing selected citizens on the "Government line" by the State Department originated with Secretary Acheson and his regime in that Department. It was a clever method of indoctrinating prominent but unwary people in civilian life. Powerful women's organizations were given particular attention (and very successfully) by the Acheson propagandists. Groups walking into this indoctrination web were made to feel that they had been carefully chosen to hear the real "low down" on what was happening in world affairs. Many are said to have tumbled.

The latest State Department briefing session, aside from the appearance of old Acheson followers still thumping hard for UN on a Republican payroll, produced a novel explanation for changing the names of certain Department bureaus. Under Acheson there was a bureau called "United Nations Affairs." Its name has recently been changed to "International Organization Affairs." Under Acheson there was also a bureau then called "Office of United Nations Economic and Social Affairs" which is now changed to "Office of International, Economic and Social Affairs."

At the meeting, some UN admirers—apparently indignant that the words "United Nations" had been dropped in the titling of the above bureaus—wanted to know why it had been done. A State Department spokesman intimated in substance that they had been dropped because they were an impediment to obtaining appropriations on Capitol Hill, that more money could be collected for UN work by such bureaus if this work were not so clearly identified.

Between Covers: In the October *Freeman*, "UMT, The Promise of Disaster," by former Representative Howard Buffett . . . In the *American Mercury*, "The Oppenheimer Story," by J. B. Matthews — a good antidote to the pro-Oppenheimer propaganda in current issues of the *Atlantic* and *Harpers* . . . In *The Brief*, Phi Delta Phi legal quarterly (Winter, 1954 issue), a review by U.S. Federal Judge Claude McCulloch of "The Strange Book on the Strange Case of Alger Hiss." The latter is the volume by the British Earl Jowitt, who seeks to clear Alger Hiss.

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